



**BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

March 8, 2005

The Honorable Henry Hyde
Chairman
House Committee on International Relations
Washington, DC 20515-6017

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Pursuant to Section 103 of the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004 (P.L. 103-), I am pleased to transmit the attached report regarding the status of current United States broadcasting to North Korea, and outlining the costs and technical requirements for increasing that transmission to 12 hours per day.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can provide additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Tomlinson". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "K" and a trailing flourish.

Kenneth Y. Tomlinson
Chairman

Report to Congress
Pursuant to H.R. 4011
The North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004
(P.L. 108-333)

The following information is submitted pursuant to the requirements of H.R. 4011, the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-333). This legislation provides a “sense of the Congress” that the BBG should increase broadcasts to North Korea from current levels, with a goal of providing 12-hour-per-day broadcasting to North Korea, including broadcasts by Radio Free Asia and Voice of America. It also requires that the BBG submit a report to the Congress that (1) describes the status of current U.S. broadcasting to North Korea; and (2) outlines a plan for increasing such broadcasts to 12 hours per day, including a detailed description of the technical and fiscal requirements necessary to implement the plan.

Broadcasting in Korean to North Korea remains a priority for the Broadcasting Board of Governors and the Administration. Although it is one of the most difficult environments for international broadcasting, we believe we are providing programming during those key hours of the day when our research indicates that North Koreans are most likely to be listening – late at night in the privacy of their homes. Surveys of North Korean defectors indicate that this remains the time when North Korean citizens are most likely to venture to listen to international broadcasts, deemed illegal by the state.

Background

It is well known that the North Korean government suppresses all forms of free speech and that its press is nothing more than a propaganda instrument. Over the past three years, North Korea has taken last place in the Reporters Without Borders ranking of countries regarding respect for press freedom. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, the government’s control of the media has helped to ensure that North Korea’s chronic food shortage and recent famine is one of the most underreported disasters in the world.

On June 13, 2004 North Korean authorities designated radio sets as a “new enemies of the regime” according to Reporters Without Borders. Additionally the country's penal code includes listening to foreign broadcasts and possessing dissident publications as crimes against the state that are punishable by imprisonment and death. It is not known how many people have been imprisoned for the crime of listening to foreign broadcasts, but in a 2003 survey of refugees/defectors, 63 percent of respondents indicated that they knew of someone who was punished for this crime.

Although most radios in North Korea have dials fixed to the state radio's medium wave frequency, surveys of North Korean defectors in 2003 and 2004 by InterMedia Survey

project that between a quarter and half of the North Koreans interviewed had personally modified their radios to receive short wave signals from foreign broadcasts, and that approximately the same number knew of other people in North Korea who had similarly modified their fixed-channel radios. These efforts were made in spite of almost universal knowledge of the laws against listening to foreign broadcasts.

Against the enormous risks, studies show that North Koreans are, in fact, listening to international radio and to VOA and RFA. Although the BBG is not able to survey audiences inside North Korea, interviews of North Korean defectors allow us to make certain assumptions about listening habits. In the interviews conducted by InterMedia in 2003 and 2004, we found that 28 to 31 percent of the North Korean defectors said they had listened to VOA. Twelve to 18 percent had listened to RFA. Listening occurred both in North Korea and in transition countries (such as China) where the individuals resided temporarily after fleeing North Korea.

Status of Current BBG Broadcasting to North Korea

Because of the repressive legal and political atmosphere, listening to foreign broadcasts inside North Korea appears to be low during the daytime hours between 7:00 AM and 5:00 PM. Listenership spikes sharply in the evening hours, peaking at approximately 10:00 PM, and falling off again at about 1:00 AM. These are the hours during which BBG focuses its Korean broadcast transmission.

Service Costs for VOA and RFA

VOA employs 12 full-time staff, with an annual Service budget of approximately \$1.4 million. The Service currently produces 1.5 original hours a day of news and information programming for broadcast to the people of North Korea, or 10.5 hours a week. In January 2003, VOA began repeating these hours for a total of three hours a day of accurate and comprehensive reporting, with fresh news updates every hour. This provides a total 21 VOA program hours per week.

RFA currently employs 15 staff in its Korean Service, with an annual budget of approximately \$1.5 million. RFA generates an hour and 15 minutes of original programming per day. Again, the original program hours are repeated each day, providing a total of 28 broadcast hours per week. Together, VOA and RFA provide 42 broadcast hours per week.

The current broadcast schedule takes advantage of the early morning and late night listening habits of North Koreans to international broadcasting:

Current Broadcast Times:

| North Korea time | UTC | EST | Remarks |
|--------------------|-------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 5:00 - 5:30 A.M. | 2000 - 2030 | 3:00 - 3:30 P.M. | VOA Original Program |
| 5:30 - 6:00 A.M. | 2030 - 2100 | 3:30 - 4:00 P.M. | VOA Repeat |
| 6:00 - 7:00 A.M. | 2100 - 2200 | 4:00 - 5:00 P.M. | RFA Original |
| 7:00 - 8:00 A.M. | 2200 - 2300 | 5:00 - 6:00 P.M. | RFA Repeat |
| 10:00 - 11:00 P.M. | 1300 - 1400 | 8:00 - 9:00 A.M. | VOA Original |
| 11:00 - 12:00 P.M. | 1400 - 1500 | 9:00 - 10:00 A.M. | VOA Repeat |
| 12:00 - 12:15 A.M. | 1500 - 1515 | 10:00 - 10:15 A.M. | RFA Original |
| 12:15 - 2:00 A.M. | 1515 - 1700 | 10:15 - 12:00 noon | RFA Repeat |

There are indications that there may now be a greater opportunity to reach the North Korean public with reports that radios are becoming more available in public markets and that individuals increasingly make use of unregistered radio sets while keeping a "legal" set for inspection by the security police. The 2004 InterMedia survey of North Korean defectors found that 57 percent of respondents owned "wired" radios, 37 percent owned AM radios, and 10 percent owned a shortwave radio.

Transmission

Currently, VOA and RFA Korean broadcasts a total of 7 hours daily at an annual transmission cost of \$700,000. While RFA is broadcast only on the shortwave band, VOA Korean is also broadcast on a leased medium wave (AM) transmitter in Russia near the border with North Korea. North Korea jams RFA Korean broadcasts. In spite of the jamming, North Korean defectors and visitors to North Korea, including a former U.S. diplomat and Korean Service employees, report that transmission signals are clearly audible.

Enhancement to 12 hours per day

While there are a number of options the BBG could consider to enhance broadcasting to North Korea, the options proposed in this report are limited by the constraints of the current budget and the fiscal year 2006 request that is now before the Congress. Because the FY '06 request does not assume an enhancement in BBG programming in Korean, this report presents the most cost-effective method of increasing programming to 12 hours a day, thus making broadcasts available on a more regular basis to listeners who may have limited opportunities to tune in.

Five hours of shortwave transmission could be added to the existing seven hours daily of broadcasting by VOA and RFA. The estimate for shortwave transmission costs takes into account already heavily utilized BBG transmission facilities. It is also important to note that there are a limited number of BBG transmission sites that may be used for the broadcast of RFA programming. In addition, to implement this program, the agency

would endeavor to absorb the cost with minimal disruptions to other programs but cannot rule out consideration of reductions in transmission hours and costs for other lower priority language services in order to offset the new requirement.

Currently, BBG Korean's seven hours of daily shortwave broadcasts cost approximately \$.7 million a year:

- VOA 3 hours daily at \$.2 million
- RFA 4 hours daily at \$.5 million

The average cost of SW per hour for each broadcaster is \$56/hour for VOA and \$83/hour for RFA. To implement the increase to 12 hours per day, the BBG could add three VOA hours and two RFA hours to its program schedule. The additional cost would be approximately \$182,000 for RFA (with 3 SW frequencies) and \$123,000 for VOA (with 2 SW frequencies) for a total annual estimated cost of \$305,000. Radio Free Asia broadcasts would receive the added shortwave frequency due to the presence of jamming. An alternative, and slightly less costly, proposal would add five additional hours of VOA broadcasts at an estimated cost of \$205,000. Therefore, the range of transmission funding required to add 5 hours of Korean programming would be \$205,000 - \$305,000 annually.

The BBG would propose to transmit the VOA and RFA programming in an integrated program stream, to the extent permitted by the transmission resources available to each service. Programming would be scheduled to take advantage of peak, late night listening hours.

Surveys of North Korean defectors indicate a strong interest in a wide variety of topics from foreign radio. These range from economic and political news about North Korea, South Korea, and China, to the issue of reunification between the North and South, relations between North Korea and the U.S., and international economic developments. Profiles of the lives of North Korean defectors before and after arriving in South Korea; reports on North Korea's activities in other countries (diplomatic, military, trade, etc.); background reports on U.S.-North Korea relations; and interviews with Congressional leaders and Administration officials would remain a part of the program fare, as well as programming related to democracy, human rights, freedom of expression and press, the rule of law and a market economy. The BBG would continue to provide up-to-the-minute news programming to North Korean audiences that is relevant to the lives of listeners, and satisfies our mission to promote freedom and democracy.